Lack of Motivation in ESL students and Effective Teaching Skills

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Abstract: **The English language plays an important role in the daily lives of people all around the world, non the less the Nursing students who will be working in medical atmosphere. Till this day, there is a population of students that still find learning English difficult. This paper will mainly focus on one aspect, which is lack of motivation. This paper will look at causes of lack of motivation to learn, as well as the impacts of such lack, and the ways to resolve this. Teachers must be aware of this dilemma that might not be apparent but still causes great hindrance in learning. Teachers must look at ways to solve lack of motivation by using effective teaching strategies and motivation skills and strategies through differentiation of teaching.**

Keywords: **ESL, effective teaching methods and strategies, motivation skills, differentiation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

There are many aspects which lead to lack of knowledge and understanding of learning a second language. Many students have a weak prior knowledge of the language due to prior experiences that were unsuccessful. Factors such as age, gender, health, language, and ethnic and cultural background all play a role in how successful learning happens. The confidence level of the students will also determine how much they are willing to put an effort into learning or whether they are willing to learn. Motivation and lack of motivation are also another factor that play a major role in the learning experience. Teachers must be aware to pinpoint a student who lacks motivation and find out the real reason behind this lack of motivation whether it be extrinsic or intrinsic. There are many barriers to learning that teachers must eliminate to connect with students. Some of these barriers are limited resources where students cannot and do not have the resources to aid their learning. Language is also another important barrier of learning where students do not understand what is happening in the lesson, therefore adding to their lack of motivation. This paper aims at looking at the different ways language learning is hindered and how language learning barriers add to the lack of motivation in students learning English as a second language. This paper also aims to provide solutions to tackle these barriers and how to motivate the different kinds of learners.

II. MOTIVATION

Motivation is found in all learning processes. Motivation put simply is defined as 'the force that activates, directs, and sustains goal-directed behavior' (Woon et al, 2016). Motivation influences all the world around us whether it be environmental, perception and senses, memory, and cognitive development. Sources of motivation include extrinsic factors that happen outside a person's control. Another source of motivation is intrinsic which are the personal aims that focus on the physical, mental, and affective factors. There are many theories of motivation. One of which is the behavioral theory which looks at biological responses associated with stimuli and rewards. This theory looks at the consequences of doing something and what happens when a person is reinforced with good or positive behavior or in other cases punished to decrease a certain behavior. Some learners are motivated by such actions. For example, when students are awarded by their teachers, parents, or peers for a positive action in learning such as getting a high score on a test they are motivated to repeat such behavior.

Another theory that has been linked to motivation is cognitive theory and attribution theory. It looks at how individuals explain their success whether it be internal or external. Learners must be led into this kind of thinking where one puts an effort into something that leads to better performance and thus will be rewarded. Learners must be aware of self-attribution and be held accountable of things that they are in control of. They must be aware of the discrepancy of their actions and how it creates an imbalance. If they see a conflict, they must have the motivation to reach a solution which forces them to change their behavior. Students must be self-aware of themselves and their abilities. Positive self-concept empowers them to feel competent, and they will be able to try new things and strive for success. Positive feedback from teachers, parents and peers will empower students and add to their motivation. Motivation is greatly linked with learning a second language. It affects how the students will respond to failures and successful achievements. Without motivation, students who lack the skills of learning will fail to correct themselves and try again thinking they are unfit for such learning. Some students who don't have intrinsic motivation will not even try to learn. Educational administrations and staff must investigate the ways of motivating learners to ensure the success of learning. If the learner requires extrinsic motivation, teachers can focus on a reward system or provide positive feedback. Learners can be rewarded with a student of the week badge for trying hard or sent home with a certificate of achievement that can be celebrated with their family increasing extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, learners who lack intrinsic motivation can be delt with on a more personal level discussing reasons behind such a lack. A private meeting with the educational social worker is sometimes beneficial to discuss the reasons behind the lack of intrinsic motivation. Some learners might want to change their speciality or need help acclimating to the change from their previous educational background. With this help, learners will gradually increase their motivation in learning and give themselves a chance to change their though process towards learning.

III. HOW STUDENTS LEARN

Learning is a general term that means acquiring new skills, behaviors, or knowledge. As a survival mechanism, people have learned in all different stages of their lives. Whether it be to hunt prey or learn to communicate or present a skill, learning has allowed humans to survive to our modern day. Learning in this sense is closely related to Skinner's theory of behaviorism as the learner is rewarded positively or negatively with each learning behavior (Crystal 1987). David Crystal stated that this is "the classical explanation of language learning […] that it was essentially a process of imitation and reinforcement" (Crystal 1987 p.34). However, teachers know that learning happens in different ways and not just through trial and error or repetition. It is important to note that learning a first language is different from learning a second language. Children at a young age acquire a language by hearing and repetition alone. 'Acquisition is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language while learning is a conscious process that results in knowing about language' (Krashen, 1989, p1). Children acquiring a first language make sense of the language by mentally constructing a scheme that reiterates what they hear. Scholars have long sought to find the best ways for people to learn. Behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism are some of the theories that explain how people learn. It is not the purpose of this paper to delve into the different theories of learning but to shed light on the different ways students learn. All teachers have a theoretical approach to teaching and learning, but what must be kept in mind is the overall outcome of applying such theory. Teachers must know before entering a class which theory to use to achieve the goals of a lesson. Planning a lesson means predicting how the class will go and how actions will lead to your learners' learning. Therefore, teachers must develop their understanding of the different learning theories to fit their own experience of language learning and teaching. It is important to curate one's own compilation of theories during teaching because each theory concentrates on different parts of the learning process. Applying the correct theory of learning can greatly affect learners' motivation. What works with one student successfully might not work with another student. This is important for teachers to take note of when preparing lessons with a variety of learners.

Not only are theories of learning important to take into consideration but also different strategies and techniques are needed to lure and motivate learners as each is different. It is crucial to take into consideration that each student is different and that the learners' "attitudes and actions will be molded by many factors, personal, political, psychological and sociological" (Wallwork 1984 p.151). Consequently, lesson preparation must cater to these differences learning styles. Some, and not all, learning styles include the visual, auditory, verbal, and kinesthetic known as VARK. Teachers must be well trained in pinpointing the different learners in the classroom so that they can prepare the required materials and teaching strategies required for each learning style.

It is important for teachers to notice how learners are different and learn best when the material is delivered in different methods. For example, when teaching vocabulary definition and translation is not enough to reach long-term memory. So,

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using pictures and videos where applicable is a way for teachers to ensure they vary the material. Some people learn best through communication and human interaction; this is the social constructivist theory (Active Learning' 2022). This can be applied when allowing pair work as students collaborate and reach solutions together while applying the learnt material. To ensure that students' understanding reaches higher levels of Benjamin Bloom's framework of learning teachers must not rely on one method of recalling and remembering but to extend knowledge and reach higher levels of cognition of applying and creating. To extend vocabulary comprehension, for example, ask students to provide their sentences or use the lexical items in examples from their everyday scenarios. This falls under the constructivist theory where learning is more hands-on and uses their experience to add to the new material. Constructivism happens when "making meaning, children replace or adapt their existing knowledge and understanding with deeper levels of understanding." (Active Learning 2022). Some learners are experiential learners where they need to go through an experience such as a science experiment or a project to grasp the new learning to transform their knowledge. One way this could be applied is by having students work on a 5-minute presentation so they can add their personal views and experiences to the task.

To motivate and engage learners, teachers can apply strategies that allow for a student-centered class rather than a teacher-centered one. One method that is usually applied is the PPP learning model which is the presentation, practice, and production. During the presentation stage, teachers must ensure to use varied methods of instruction because learners are different and acquire knowledge differently. For example, when presenting grammar, start with a bottom-up approach by providing examples and ensuring they understand the meaning behind the tense of the verb. Then use a picture of a timeline to provide visual learners where past tense verbs fall in time in comparison to other verbs. Catering to auditory learners by having them listen to dialogues using the tense is also a way to provide inclusive education where no learner is left behind. After careful explanation and representation of example sentences, students are allowed plenty of time to practice through pair work, completing worksheets, and through extended practice with appropriate use of scaffolding. In this stage, teachers must focus on creating a relaxed atmosphere because learning happens in a safe and risk-free environment where they feel it's ok to make mistakes and not be punished. The production phase is seen at the end when they are required to apply the given grammar during class exercises, speaking and writing, and assessments. Choosing such methods will allow students to be engaged and active in a class and will provide them with a chance to think about their learning experience. They learn about their weaknesses and strengths. This process will eventually lead to metacognition. It is when students are "actively monitoring one's learning and making changes to one's learning behaviors and strategies based on this monitoring"." ('Getting Started with Metacognition' 2022). Metacognition is thinking about thinking. It is when students think about what they learnt, how they learned it best, or haven't learned, and what strategies worked for them. It is also a way of monitoring their own progress and choosing strategies that best suit them. When learners are stuck, they must be allowed to change the strategies used and teachers must allow and cater for such a change. This change is beneficial to the learner as it will increase the chance of a longer recall. When students are allowed to monitor their comprehension, deeper levels of learning will be reached. When students feel that they have control in their learning process and when they feel safe to do so with the help of teachers their motivation level will increase.

IV. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

One of the ways to tackle lack of motivation is concentrating on quality teaching. Quality teaching comes by focusing on training teachers to apply correct use of differentiated instruction, effective class management, and applying the correct method of assessments. It is said, in the article "What is Differentiated Instruction", that "differentiating instruction means that the teacher anticipates the differences in student's readiness, interests, and learning profiles and, as a result, creates different learning paths so that students have the opportunity to learn as much as they can" (2022).Educators must keep in mind that not all students are the same as David Nunan suggests that "even what on the surface looked to be very homogenous groups, learners were different and learned in different ways [and therefore] individualization was an important element" (Nunan 2013 p.8). Differentiating the teaching process can be made by presenting the same lesson through modeling, practicing, watching, listening, and then writing. Students can also receive different feedback depending on their needs through peer and teacher reviews. This feedback needs to be given in a positive way that is not too harsh or else it will hinder motivation. Teachers can tell students what went well or what needs more work rather than putting a grade on a task. Differentiating content can be made by asking higher-end questions to the mature students which they applied to real-life situations. Tasks can also be divided into and adapted to the learner's needs and abilities. Providing students who lack motivation with simpler and more direct tasks will increase their motivation. Giving them feedback in a safe manner will provide a safe atmosphere for such learner to produce and be more active. Not all students process information at the same time as some students need more time to comprehend and apply tasks. Differentiating time and having students work at their own pace can have an impact on students' motivation.

V.   EFFECTIVE CLASS MANAGEMENT

There are many points to consider when managing a classroom. Effective class management could mean that teachers must ensure the class is a safe place to learn. It also means that teachers must make sure everybody respects one another, and no shaming happens in the classroom. Managing a class also means that the right ambience is set for learning and that the learners are well behaved and silent when the teacher is delivering knowledge to ensure that all learners are focusing and are not being distracted by misbehavior or loud noise. However, there is another aspect of an effectively managed class. First, to manage a class, a lesson must be well prepared for and must be part of a sequence of lessons that achieve the course's goal and aims. Teachers must not look at goals individually but rather as a set of a whole. What are the objectives of this course given? What are learners expected to know and do at the end of the course? Students must be made aware of these objectives. It is crucial for teachers to discuss the main objectives of the course at the beginning of the year. Not only should learners made aware of the objectives of the course but also of each lesson's objectives and goals. This is crucial to aid their learning process and to assess themselves during reflection. When students are aware of what they are supposed to learn they will know where they are lacking and if they have achieved the goal of the lesson or not. To have effective class management teachers must wisely choose the appropriate learning strategy that is applied in the lesson. Being unprepared for what might happen in class is a great hinderance to motivating students. One strategy that is applied to the whole class might leave some learners behind and passive as this one strategy does not work with them well. Therefore, applying active learning strategies is important in motivating learners because they will be active and adding to their learning process in contra to being idle and passive learners. For example, playing alphabet games, using think-pare-share, and 1-minute paper are some of the active learning strategies that can be used. "Research shows that active learning is much better recalled, enjoyed and understood" (Petty 2022). Lessons must contain a variety of resources such as videos, role-play, audio, pictures, dialogues, and charts to grab the learner's attention. Teachers must be aware that the learning material must be adapted according to the learners' needs. Having smooth transitions between tasks and giving the learners enough time to digest the information is crucial in effective teaching.

Focusing on lesson planning is also a way to have effective class management. Through planning, a lesson will be effectively managed in time, procedures, resources, and behaviors and this will allow for a smooth routine and transitions between lessons. Careful planning gives a chance to "decide what your priorities are for the material you need to cover to avoid racing from one topic to another in a frenzied attempt to get through an overstuffed course outline" (Brandvik 44). Preparing the lesson with clear objectives and logical sequence of a beginning, a middle, and an ending are all ways to help ease the students in the learning process and avoid shocks that will hinder students' motivation. All tasks must achieve the aims of the lesson which should be shared with the students at the beginning of the lesson. This is important for the learner so that they can monitor their progress throughout the lesson. Starting a lesson with revising past knowledge by watching a video or by playing a game will ease the learner and provide a safe environment for them and encourage them to add to their knowledge. Reviewing previous knowledge is important to avoid moving on to unfamiliar topics that will hinder students' learning. "A lesson is a combination of various activities that need to fit together and run smoothly, each one building on or complimenting what goes before and helping with what goes after" (Akoue et al, 71). During the practice phase of the lesson, asking learners a variety of motivating tasks, such as searching the web and brainstorming, is a way to motivate the students without instilling fear of learning in demotivated students. This is encouraging as the class will start with easier tasks that are achievable and not hinder their enthusiasm. Students must be given ample time to review and learn through jigsaw activity, pair work, sharing their answers and correcting their mistakes. Students must be given a chance to apply their knowledge through motivating activities such as organizing charts, completing worksheets through pair work, summarizing information on cards, and providing examples to apply their learning. The ending of the lesson must be utilized to review the learning and to focus on achieving the goals of the lesson. All tasks mustn't be too demanding, and teachers must cater to differentiate the tasks according to each student's needs. For example, asking demotivated students to rearrange word cards correctly and having the mature students explain their reasons is a way to differentiate an exercise.

New learning should be built on students' existing learning. In the constructivist teaching approach "Learning should involve activities to process the new material, linking it to what the student already knows. Tasks should be authentic, set in a meaningful context, and related to the real world." (Petty 2011). To check their prior knowledge of expressing quantity, students can be asked to brainstorm the different ways to talk about certain topics. Relating what is being taught to topics that are familiar to the students is also a motivating strategy. The students will provide examples and teachers will be able to evaluate what they already knew and how to add to their knowledge. The focus when checking prior knowledge "is that

teachers need to pay attention to the incomplete understandings" (Bransford et al, p.10). Some lessons will require the teacher to focus on areas more than others depending on what the learners know. Making sure of the existing knowledge will allow teachers to change the pace of the lesson and how to plan materials for the next lesson.

VI. ASSESSMENT

There are two types of assessments, formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments "is assessment for learning. It is used at the beginning of an instructional period and during the process of instruction as teachers check for students' understanding and where there are gaps and misconceptions. Formative assessment is "assessment as learning, where students reflect on and monitor their progress" (Teacher's Guide to Assessment 2016). An example of formative assessment is checking and reflecting on students' work during the practice phase of the class. Also monitoring their pair work and discussions; checking their answers on the worksheets either individually or having the learners mark their work are all ways of formative assessment. On the other hand, "Summative assessment data provides teachers with information about how effective teaching strategies have been," (Teacher's Guide to Assessment 2016). Summative assessment, therefore, summarizes a particular phase of learning by demonstrating students' knowledge in quizzes or exams. It is the assessment of learning.

Part of an effectively managed class is applying formative assessment along the teaching process to ensure that quality learning was achieved. Peer review, oral assessment, and written work assessment can be applied at different stages of the learning. Each student can benefit from differentiating the assessment used to suit their learning and provide correct feedback that can encourage their motivation rather than hinder it. Teaching without focusing on the outcome of the lesson or checking what students have learned is a great disadvantage in the learning process. "Teachers are required to assess learners to evaluate their progress" (Akoue et al, 2015 p.65). It is a tool that provides feedback to the learners to know what went well, and what needs extra revision. Peer review and observation are subtle ways to utilize formative assessment without bringing fear of being harshly judged and graded. By giving them enough time, through pair work, students will be allowed to work freely and learn from each other through experimenting with different examples. Also, using 1 minute paper is an efficient and time saving way to assess all the learners. This allows students to self-monitor their progress and ask for help where needed. It is important to have such feedback so both the learner and educator know what to focus on and what to extend on.

Choosing different methods of assessment is beneficial in adding confidence in the learners and teaches them to monitor their progress or lack of. For example, oral assessment and having a glance at their written work can be used throughout the lesson or when there is a task to be completed. Asking confident students to share their answers orally and write them on the whiteboard is a way to assess progress. It can also provide the less confident learner with an example to follow on. Applying formative assessment throughout the lesson "helps make students' thinking visible to themselves, their peers, and their teacher. This provides feedback that can guide modification and refinement in thinking" (Brandsford et al, p.19). Other ways of assessment include checking written work such as using workbook exercises and summary cards. It is important to note that positive feedback from the teacher is crucial to motivate learners. This method will ensure that all students are on the right track to achieving the objective. The best practices include "the giving of specific and timely feedback, for example, through conversations between students and the teacher, written feedback, peer assessment, and self-assessment" (Teacher's Guide to Assessment 2016). At the end of the lesson, as a wrap-up, oral assessment and a small teacher strategy are ways to check learners' understanding. Providing enough time to reflect on their learning experience is an important strategy in active learning. Students must be given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and know exactly what went well and what needs more attention. It is a way to motivate them to work hard on the areas they are lacking, or even better to encourage them to ask for help. Having a safe environment where learners are not only expected to complete quizzes and exams and given grades, but an environment that provides less harsh assessment strategies is one of the ways to motivate learners.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper aimed to look at the different reasons why students lack motivation in learning English and how lack of motivation is a hinderance to learning a language. Teaching English as a second language to demotivated students requires attention from teachers and school administrations. There are many reasons behind learners' lack of motivation. The first step is to pinpoint the demotivated learners and investigate the reasons behind the lack of motivation. Some learners might need intrinsic or extrinsic factors to help increase their motivation. Questions fall around the student's learning and

educational background and if past experiences are the culprit to lack of motivation. School setting and effective classroom management skills might also be a reason for students' lack of motivation. Having well prepared and planned lessons is also crucial to aid optimal learning. Teachers must be aware of the different learning theories of how students learn to apply the correct teaching method. Differentiated instruction and active learning strategies are ways to apply and cater for the different learning types found in a classroom. Applying such strategies will work to motivate learners. Teachers must also focus on ways to apply correct and safe ways of formative assessment that is not too harsh or criticising throughout the lesson. Teachers must also be aware that motivating learners will take time and effort to see results and educational administrations must have a way to monitor the progress of such students.

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